

Subject: Community Outreach

Submitted by: Dr. Larry Pesta

Draft Counseling Question

Rev. Edward Viljoen

reved@sonic.net

Dear Ministers,

I am requesting your opinions and advice on the following matter

Edward

Dear Edward,

My son has strong anti-war beliefs and in order to be exempt from the draft he will have to prove that this is true. I am wondering if he was a formal member of our church if our mission statement, and our Global Heart vision and mission statement could be used to document and substantiate his personal beliefs about peace. As the senior minister are you in a position to write a reference letter if a youth asks for your support in documenting his commitment to peace?

I am only beginning my inquiries around this whole topic. I don't want to be in a reactive state should the draft come into reality so I am planning ahead. I imagine if the draft does come about that you will be asked about this from other parents as well. This might be a good time to consider CSL's position or the parameters around this if you haven't already, yes?

I appreciate your consideration of this important subject.

(Name withheld)

Dr. Larry Pesta

<http://www.spiritworksphoenix.org>

Dear Edward,

I am proud to say that I was ready to file as a conscientious objector in 1968 when I suddenly won the Selective Service lottery and received a number of 328 which

immediately indicated that I would never be drafted. Instead of doing all of the paperwork, I was free to pursue my study of English literature. My brother however did file as a conscientious objector.

Your best source for material on this subject of letter writing is The Society of Friends (Quakers). An older Quaker minister who served during the Vietnam era would be an excellent source of information on this topic. The Jehovah's Witnesses and Mennonites also do not participate in war activities.

I think it would be helpful if the UCRS formally opened an "office" or rather established a "ministerial committee" to facilitate this process and provide information for our young people. This committee of ministers could work closely with other denominations and do what was necessary within our denomination to help provide this moral option for those involved in this aspect of the Selective Service process. This committee of ministers could do what is necessary to legitimize this option in our denomination. We could help our young people prepare themselves for their individual hearings where they will need to defend their moral positions.

I have been following all of the details concerning the draft. An interesting website can be found at:

<http://www.bushdraft.com>

Also, you may want to go to this group of links:

<http://www.endselectiveservice.org/buzz.html>

I have been following this topic with interest since I teach full-time at the community college level, and the draft is going to affect my students once it is initiated. The draft will not offer student exemptions, and it seems females will be drafted as well.

I hope this helps you somewhat.